



BUILDING STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

Meeting Report

May 17, 2004

PRESENT: Chair Cindy Chavez, Councilmember Ken Yeager, Councilmember Nora Campos, Councilmember Chirco

STAFF: Jim Holgersson, City Manager's Office; John Weis, San Jose Redevelopment Agency; Cynthia Bojorquez, Jill Cody and Rick Stanton, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services; Avo Makdessian, Mayor's Office; Norm Sato, City Attorney's Office; Michael LaRocca and Susan Price-Chang, Burbank Del Monte NAC.

The meeting convened at 1:35 p.m.

a. Commendation (Councilmember Yeager)

Councilmember Yeager introduced Michael LaRocca and Susan Price-Change of the Burbank Del Monte NAC presenting their asset mapping. He feels this type of mapping would be very beneficial for all the SNI neighborhoods.

Michael LaRocca narrated a brief powerpoint presentation. The Burbank/Del Monte Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Needs Analysis was completed by community members in the summer of 2003 and fulfills Priority 5 in the B/DM SNI Plan of June 2002.

Councilmember Campos extended her praises on a job well done.

Councilmember Chirco stated this shows again how much strength, power and knowledge there is in our grass roots communities.

Chairperson Chavez added the report was awesome.

Councilmember Yeager presented the Burbank/Del Monte Advisory Committee with a commendation in recognition of completing their Programs/Services Inventory and Facility Needs Assessment mapping one of the goals in their Top Ten list. Thank you for continuing to make the Burbank/Del Monte community a place in which we proud to live, work and play.

No action was required by the Committee.

b. Anti-Graffiti and Litter Update (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services)

Jill Cody presented the Anti-Graffiti and Litter highlights. Since the start of the Graffiti Program the graffiti has been reduced by 96%. The Adopt-A-Block volunteers painted over and removed a little over 124,000 square feet of graffiti. The Weekend Juvenile Offender program has picked up 3,400 bags of litter from July to March 2004. The "Avoid the 13" type of campaign to address the problem of debris escaping from unsecured truck beds was held on April 24 and 25, 2004.

Chairperson Chavez asked for any questions or comments from the Committee. She expressed her excitement about the open truck bed campaign. This was a huge event and they had been trying to get something going to address this problem area for a long time.

Ms. Cody stated this type of campaign will continue. It was a very successful weekend.

No action was required by the Committee.

c. Volunteer San Jose Update (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services/ City Manager's Office)

Ms. Cody addressed the Committee referencing the accomplishments of the Volunteer San Jose Program.

- Volunteer San Jose now has a website with a tremendous amount of information and job descriptions.
- The new volunteer brochure was distributed to the Committee.
- A Volunteer Handbook and Program Manual were also developed.
- A Technical Assistance Team was developed and the team is coordinating with the City of San Jose-Call Center.
- The Technical Assistance Team is staffed from the City Manager's Office, Department of Transportation, Library, Mayor's Office, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, Police Department, San Jose Redevelopment Agency, San Jose Prepared and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.
- Staff is working with Cal Trans on monthly litter pickups at freeways and off-ramps in coordination with Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) areas.

Ms. Cody added upcoming activities being planned and include developing a corporation participation marketing plan; organizing a team community service component; organizing an external advisory panel; Adopt-a-Trail Program has been drafted for implementation soon; and development of an aggressive marketing campaign to have residents more aware of volunteer opportunities within the City.

Councilmember Campos asked how are you going out identifying and encouraging people to adopt a "Hot Spot"?

Rick Stanton stated it has been easy to get people to volunteer and pickup litter whenever they wanted to. It has been really difficult to get them to adopt a certain spot. The City only has 59 out of 150 adopted at this point in time. Staff is recruiting at churches, community

meetings, fairs, and festivals. Staff setup at store fronts and we will try anything and everything to get the volunteers to adopt the “hot spots” but they have only been marginally successful in doing so.

Councilmember Campos asked if staff is working with all the SNI’s?

Mr. Stanton stated staff are at several meetings throughout the various SNI areas. Staff attend the meetings as well as addressing communities when they are invited. A list of Neighborhood Associations was provided by the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) that they will be contacting and inviting themselves to the next meetings.

Chairperson Chavez expressed a “thank you” for a good update.

No action was required by the Committee.

d. SNI Business Plan Update (City Manager’s Office/ San Jose Redevelopment Agency)

Jim Holgersson addressed the Committee on the evolving story on the Business Plan for Strong Neighborhoods. Staff has been out in the neighborhoods meeting with at the NAC’s and PAC with several presentations and discussions. The author of the plan is the neighborhood and the neighborhood vision and priorities. Staff is currently doing a final check with the neighborhoods during May and June. At this point in time the plan is a living document.

Mr. Holgersson stated the clear timelines, milestones and responsibilities are articulated for each and every one of the priorities. A section was added on how we connect to opportunities with universities and colleges. Staff are applying the lessons learned to effectively connect with the neighborhoods. An entire section was added on Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) since it does play a very important role in providing resources and assets relative to leadership building, training and education for all neighborhoods. The plan also clarifies that Building Strong Neighborhoods is a citywide initiative and SNI is a major component of building strong neighborhoods. The performance measurements have also been adjusted and incorporated where we could, with the CSA performance standards so that they are linking the Strong Neighborhoods Business Plan with the CSA business plans. In regards to the community outcome staff would like to continue tracking within the next few months and continue to get feedback from the neighborhoods and stakeholders through July.

Councilmember Chirco stated she is pleased to see the plan is looking at the entire city with SNI as a subset. In building strong neighborhoods all of San Jose needs to be included in a business plan like the one presented. How do you solicit feedback from areas other than those in a NAC?

Mr. Holgersson stated the community survey that is done every two years is where we are collecting the data from and it is divided by both SNI and city wide input. These questions and performance standards included in the plan are actually from the community survey.

Councilmember Chirco stated the community service needs to be called out in the plan so the community has a mechanism for citywide feedback.

Mr. Holgersson added the feedback is requested every two years.

Councilmember Campos asked who will be delivering the presentation to the NAC's and how?

Mr. Holgersson said he, Cynthia Bojorquez, Kip Harkness and John Weis are personally presenting the copy of the Business Plan with a brief presentation to promote dialog for feedback. They also let groups know they can come back again for any follow-up or concerns.

Councilmember Yeager asked what items are going to be decided before staff goes back out to the community and how much input will the community really have on some of the plan? His first concern is with the effects of reduction in staffing. Is this something that is going to happen and we are going to have to deal with the fewer resources available to staff?

Mr. Holgersson said the presentation to the NAC's is talking with them about what we are going to be doing. There are almost 95 priorities in the budget at some level of funding. Staff has informed them that it is time to rethink the staffing structure regardless of the budget issues. The question they tend to have is based on who is going to be working with us? What we have heard from the majority is we just want to make sure we get the right people to get the job done.

Councilmember Yeager asked are you still willing to listen if the NAC's have a compelling argument as to why something in the plan may not work?

Mr. Holgersson said the suggestion is to wait for the approval of the Business Plan until August to incorporate all the community meeting feedback. Staff has not received any comments from the NAC's stating they are opposed to the structure presented. Their biggest concern is getting the priority done no matter who does it.

Cynthia Bojorquez added there are three funding sources for staffing – San Jose Redevelopment Agency, City of San Jose-General Fund and Community Development Block Grant funds that allows flexibility. With the issue of capacity building that is when the role of NDC comes into play in terms of using our resources to continue to advance the projects.

Chairperson Chavez said it is very challenging to have two leaders being responsible. She does not know how that helps to do 1) develop staff 2) make sure we are out in the neighborhoods and 3) one voice makes sense at the senior levels.

Chairperson Chavez said she feels this is a recipe that does not assist in being successful. She personally would like staff to come back with something that really does in fact streamline and have one voice. I wish we were talking to someone with organizational development skills to help us. I feel like we are stuck and partly because we are looking at our own problem for too long.

Councilmember Yeager asked about the groupings that are being proposed. How much of this structure are we going to be looking at?

Mr. Holgersson said that (the) question and the reason they are grouped this way has to do with the staffing not the neighborhood organization. The staffing structure will continue to support each NAC with individual attention. The role of the neighborhood staff team is to facilitate and ensure that each neighborhoods priorities and needs are being addressed. The NAC's are free to choose which neighborhoods they wish to work with.

Ms. Bojorquez added if the staffing models are approved we will introduce them to the neighborhoods and then do follow-up three months later. As much as we can we are going to try to maintain the same individuals in the same neighborhoods.

Councilmember Yeager stated he has a concern on who will be filling the slots. What is important is finding the right person. He is not quit sure how you would do that with different funding groups but that is more important than the source of the funds.

Councilmember Chirco asked various questions. What is the current position of the city neighborhood? Who is the Strong Neighborhood Manager? Who is the Strong Neighborhood lead in PRNS? Is the one voice citywide or SNI wide? Does this voice speak for all of San Jose?

Kip Harkness stated absolutely the work of the Strong Neighborhoods has to be understood and included in the context for the entire City.

Chairperson Chavez added that months ago what was requested at the time was a document that was reflective of what our strong neighborhoods plan was releasing. We did recognize that SNI was an important subset of that plan. The document title has changed but the reconstruction inside does not really address or provide more inclusive language for citywide.

Mr. Harkness asked if the Committee could provide feedback on pages 10 & 11 where there is more explanation on trying to connect the two areas of SNI and citywide.

John Weis added there are constraints that the Redevelopment Agency has in assigning staff and spending funds outside of Redevelopment areas.

Chairperson Chavez stated we want to be helpful. Tell us what the Committee can do to help. We can email suggestions for the update.

Councilmember Chirco stated there is a better integration later in the document. The introduction is what the people will read first.

Norm Sato, attorney, stated email information or changes to the document needs to be held in a public session.

Avo Makdessian added if you copy the City Clerk in your responses to Jim Holgersson or staff this will be considered public.

Chairperson Chavez added she did think the revised document was a big improvement. She referenced page 9 and would like it streamlined for easier reference. Will the performance measures be in the document?

Mr. Harkness answered, "yes" the performance measures will be included when they return at the August meeting.

Chairperson Chavez stated at some level on an internal measurement we need to figure out how we are providing support to the neighborhood leaders.

Mr. Holgersson stated staff have 15 more neighborhood associations to meet with and will finish June 2nd. If we return to the Committee in June it would still be a living changing document but we will have done at least one meeting per neighborhood for community input.

Chairperson Chavez requested the Building Strong Neighborhoods return to the Committee at the next meeting in June.

The Committee accepted the update.

e. Oral Petitions

None.

f. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Cindy Chavez, Chair
Building Strong Neighborhoods Committee